



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

Live Your Best Life—Prevent Heart Disease and Cancer

“Health is a relationship between you and your body (Guillemet).” The month of October has two observances, Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness and Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Both illnesses can often be prevented with attention to diet, exercise, and drinking in moderation. Heart disease is the leading cause of death followed closely by cancer. People affected by both diseases experience diminished lifestyle activity, suffering, anxiety, and distress. The American Cancer Society (ACS) has published guidelines based on the latest evidence which states: attention to lifestyle wellness related to weight control, physical activity, diet, and decreasing alcohol ingestion can reduce the potential for life altering diseases and assist in incurring longer, healthier lifespan.

No one will argue that weight control can be a challenge. The good news is “You don’t have to eat less; you just have to eat right.” Knowing what you are putting into your mouth puts you in control. Eating out, although convenient, can contribute to unwanted pounds. Many restaurants serve and prepare foods that are highly processed. Processed foods are those that are highly refined such as cane sugars, high fructose corn syrup, and white flour. These ingredients are associated with higher cancer and diabetes risks.

Studies reveal that people who eat whole foods tend to decrease their risk of colon and breast cancer significantly. Eating foods with whole grains and plant based, such as, adding 5 servings or more of vegetables and fruit each day protect against several types of cancers. This lifestyle choice is associated with lowering the risk of more aggressive breast tumors, including estrogen-type tumors. Eating legumes (aka beans) which are rich in protein, dietary fiber, iron, zinc, potassium, and folate, are low in fat, and are a good option when trying to reduce red and processed meat consumption. There is evidence that diets high in calcium and vitamin D can prevent cancers, as well. Adding probiotics, prebiotics, seafood and vegetables high in fiber to meals while limiting the intake of red and processed meats, are all ways to keep the GI tract healthy and prevent colorectal and breast cancers.

Seven types of cancers have been linked to the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Should you choose to drink alcohol you should limit your consumption to no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 drinks per day for men. Alcohol consumption is the third modifiable cancer risk factor.

Making healthy choices that include a consistently healthy diet, physical activity, and drinking less alcohol can be a challenge when first making a lifestyle habit change, however, support in the family and community can assist in breaking the habits of living an unhealthy lifestyle. Be your best healthy self and encourage your friends and family to join you. “Your diet is a bank account. Good food choices are good investments” -Bethenny Frankel.

Take that step now. You might be craving unhealthy food and going back and forth deciding whether or not to have it. Don’t! Stop yourself now, and you will not feel the same kind of craving tomorrow.

American Cancer Society Guidelines on Diet for Cancer Prevention

1. Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight throughout life (Avoid weight gain)
2. Be physically active
 - Adults should engage in 150-300 min of moderate intensity physical activity per week, or 75-150 min. of vigorous-intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination; achieving or exceeding the upper limit of 300 min is optimal
 - Children and adolescents should engage in at least 1 hr of moderate or vigorous-intensity activity each day
 - Limit sedentary behavior, such as screen time, sitting, and lying down
3. Follow a healthy eating pattern at all ages
 - A healthy eating pattern includes:
 - o Foods that are high in nutrients in amounts that help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight
 - o A variety of vegetables—dark green, red, and orange, fiber rich legumes (beans and peas), and others
 - o Fruits, especially whole fruits with a variety of colors
 - o Whole Grains
 - A healthy eating pattern DOES NOT include:
 - o Red and processed meats
 - o Sugar-sweetened beverages
 - o Highly processed foods and refined grain products
4. It is best not to drink alcohol
 - Limit alcohol consumption to no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 drinks per day for men

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” - Lao Tzu

Rock, C.L., et al., (2020), American Cancer Society guideline for diet and physical activity for cancer prevention. CA A Cancer J Clin, 70: 245-271. <https://doi.org/10.3322/caac.2159>



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A Personal Message From Your Health Promotion
Health Myth Busting Team



Dear Health Myth Busters,

I drink energy drinks like other people drink coffee, I need my pick-me up during the day. People give me a hard time about drinking energy drinks, I don't pick on them for drinking their coffee. What's the big deal?

Sincerely,
Need to Have My Energy Drinks

Dear Need to Have My Energy Drinks,

I understand your need for caffeine, there is nothing wrong with caffeine, in fact, caffeine in moderation has some great health benefits. Energy drinks have many ingredients including caffeine that allow them to be marketed to be good, natural, and necessary because they boost one's power naturally and are necessary to enhance performance. Of course, the ads are targeted at the young. This information is far from the truth as it turns out these drinks are worse than was previously thought, they should be consumed with caution. Many of the ingredients in energy drinks are unregulated.

According to Johns Hopkins, adults can consume about 400 mg of caffeine per day, which is equal to 24 ounces or two large mugs which can help guard against certain diseases such as Alzheimer's, heart disease, and stroke. The issue with energy drinks is that the typical energy drink contains anywhere from 240-369 grams (~57-88 teaspoons) of sugar. The recommended amount of added sugar suggested by the American Heart Association is 24 grams (6 teaspoons) per day for women and 36 grams (9 teaspoons) per day for men. High sugar has been proven to contribute to many chronic diseases including obesity, heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Limiting sugar-sweetened beverages, and supplementing them with water and unsweetened beverages should be a high priority. So, instead of energy drinks choose to drink a cup or two of black coffee or add green tea to your morning routine, this will add to your energy level and provide some health benefits.

Sincerely,

Health Myth Busters

Got questions on other health issues related to sleep health, physical activity, tobacco, or nutrition? Share them with us and we will help you "Bust The Myths!" Send your questions to usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.hpo@mail.mil. Make sure to include in the subject line "Health Myth Buster." For more online health tips visit the Air Force Health Promotion webpage <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Health-Promotion/>



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